

Subsidized Guardianship

Permanency Initiative

SG Introduction

- Focuses on improving permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home care through a comprehensive Guardianship Permanency Initiative that promotes guardianship as a permanency option, the use of relatives as permanency resources, and family-based permanency planning for children.

SG Introduction

- Is consistent with the purposes of Titles IV- B and IV- E of the Social Security Act in providing child welfare services, including preserving the safety of children, protecting the rights of children and their families; and ensuring permanency for children in placement.
- Will be cost neutral to the state and federal governments for the duration of the waiver period.
- Will not impact the eligibility of children and families for other benefits.

SG Implementation

- The subsidized guardianship program will be initially implemented in Milwaukee County, where child welfare services are operated by the DCFS Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.
- The waiver includes the potential for expansion of the subsidized guardianship program to other areas of the state during the course of the five-year waiver period.

SG Evaluation/Reporting

- The demonstration will be independently evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the program, including using random assignment as a basis for conducting the evaluation.
- Costs for the demonstration project will be tracked using a federally-approved method for computing cost neutrality.
- Costs for the demonstration project will be reported in accordance with federal waiver requirements.

SG Design

- The Guardianship Permanency Initiative is designed to promote the utilization of guardianship as a permanency outcome by providing a financial subsidy equivalent to foster care payments to those caretakers willing to become permanent legal guardians for children in out-of-home care.
- By making guardianship a financially viable option, the Initiative will allow a more comprehensive, family-friendly approach to permanency planning for those children for whom reunification is not possible.
- The Initiative will focus on increased permanency for children placed with relatives through both adoption and guardianship to ensure that children do not remain in the child welfare service system solely for payment reasons.
- By achieving permanency for these children, the Initiative will allow case manager staff and the courts to concentrate on other cases, allowing more effort to be focused on cases with greater challenges to permanency.

SG Principles

- Improving permanency outcomes for children and families through more effective permanency planning that is family-focused.
- Promoting the use of relatives as foster care placement resources.
- Ensuring the safety and well being of children through permanent placements with caring adults whom will raise the children to adulthood.
- Providing services to families in ways that address the needs of children but minimizes the public child welfare involvement in the lives of families.
- Operating the guardianship subsidy program in a manner similar to the adoption assistance program.

SG Expansion

- The Title IV-E waiver request includes the potential to expand the Guardianship Permanency Initiative to other areas of Wisconsin.
- The guardianship program will be of interest to counties statewide serving children placed with relatives and may be of particular benefit in achieving permanency for certain populations, such as Native American Indian children.
- Using the initial experience in Milwaukee to develop the guardianship program, expansion will be based on the interest of other counties to participate in the program and the feasibility of expanding the program to other counties.
- Factors affecting the feasibility of expansion will include reaching an agreement between the State and counties regarding financial responsibility for guardianship payments and counties agreeing to participate in the program evaluation required by the Title IV-E waiver.

SG Statutes/Process

- Current Wisconsin law provides for two types of guardianship for children. Under Chapter 48 Wis. Stats., known as the Children Code, permanent legal guardianship can be awarded under s. 48.977 to relatives of children who have been placed with the relatives to protect the children from abuse and neglect.
- The Guardianship Permanency Initiative focuses on s. 48.977 guardianships for children in out-of-home care, including children in both licensed foster care and court-ordered Kinship Care.
- While Chapter 880 guardianship is used with some child welfare cases, Chapter 880 guardianship is not a permanency outcome and thus is outside the scope of the Guardianship Permanency Initiative.

SG Statutes/Process (cont.)

- State law under Chapter 48 will be revised as part of the Guardianship Permanency Initiative to clarify the nature of s. 48.977 guardianship as a permanency outcome and to allow the payment of guardianship subsidies.
- Guardianship will be awarded with permanence for children as the utmost concern so guardianships will not be easily disrupted.
- The guardianship process will include thoroughly educating caretakers about the responsibilities of guardianship and the differences between adoption and guardianship.
- The guardianship process will include discussions of contingency arrangements to ensure that children will be cared for in the event that the guardian dies or becomes incapacitated before the children reach adulthood.

SG Statutes/Process (cont.)

- As part of the state legislation, s. 48.977 guardianship will be expanded to allow persons other than relatives to become guardians.
- This change will allow extended family members and family friends who do not meet the statutory definition of a relative to be guardians under s. 48.977.
- The expansion of s.48.977 will be applied narrowly and relatives will continue to be the primary focus for guardianships.

SG Increased Permanency

- Guardianship will be promoted as a permanency option to achieve higher rates of permanency for children in stable foster care placements, primarily placements with relatives.
- Guardianship will be pursued only for children for whom reunification with the biological parents has been actively pursued and ruled out as a permanency option.
- Under the initiative, guardianship will typically be presented concurrently with adoption and other alternative permanency options to assist caretakers to understand the full range of options available and pursue the option that best addresses the needs and circumstances of the particular children.
- Adoption and other alternative permanency goals will not have to be formally ruled out before pursuing guardianship to avoid unnecessarily extending the stay in foster care.
- In many cases, guardianship will be considered as a concurrent permanency goal. Adoption will be thoroughly considered, however, before pursuing guardianship.

SG Eligibility

- Under the guardianship program, eligibility for guardianship subsidy payments will be limited to children who have been in licensed out-of-home care for a minimum of one year. Exceptions will be made to the one-year period for children for whom reasonable efforts at reunification are not required.
- The one-year period will ensure that reunification is actively pursued for children and ruled out as a permanency option before proceeding to guardianship.
- The one-year requirement will apply to the overall foster care episode, not the child's current placement.
- For a caretaker to be approved as guardian, the child will need to have been successfully placed with the caretaker for several months to demonstrate the stability of the placement.

SG Outcomes

- Fewer children remaining in foster care on a long-term basis.
- Increased rates of permanency for guardianship and adoption.
- Increased use of relatives as placement resources.
- Fewer disrupted placements of children.
- No increase in subsequent reports of abuse or neglect.
- Reduced administrative costs for case management services.

SG and eWiSACWIS

- The Subsidized Guardianship (SG) functionality in eWiSACWIS tracks children that are a part of the IV-E Waiver program. These children are currently a part of a family case and are generally placed in an out of home placement with a relative.
- Once the decision has been made to place the child in a Subsidized Guardianship placement the following is completed:
 - SG Agreement via Create > Placement > Subsidized Guardianship Agreement.
 - Legal Action, Legal Status, Court Documents, Case Notes, etc...
 - Program assignment of 'Subsidized Guardianship' for the child via Utilities > Program Assignment.
 - Child is deactivated from the biological family case for reason of 'SG' (similar to how a child is deactivated from a case for reason of 'TPR').
 - From the Maintain Case page: select the De-Activate link for the child who is to be deactivated for Subsidized Guardianship.
 - On the Participant Status page, select 'Subsidized Guardianship' in the Reason field. The Effective Date field will populate with the date entered in the Date of Agreement field on the Subsidized Agreement.
- Once a child is deactivated, an overnight system batch will end the current Out of Home placement in the family case, create a Subsidized Guardianship type of In-Home Service in the SG case and assign the case to the Default State SG worker.



What does it look like?



SG - Agreement

Agreements and Notices - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by DHFS - State of Wisconsin

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Agreement Information

Case Participant:	SubGuard, Andy	Date of Agreement:	02/01/2005
Agreement Type:	Subsidized Guardianship Agreement	Estimated End Date:	00/00/0000
Service Category:	<input type="text"/>	Agreement End Date:	00/00/0000
Service Type:	<input type="text"/>	Agreement Amount:	\$325.00
Adoption Subsidy Type:	<input type="text"/>	Effective Date of Amend:	00/00/0000
Provider Name:	Kathy Kellogg Search	Additional \$ per month:	\$0.00
Subsequent Guardian:	Mary Kellogg	Amended Amount:	

☐ Agreement Concluded

Parent(s)

Parent 1:

Parent 2:

Original Agreement Information

Physical:	0 Points - Not Identified	Child Specific Rate:	\$0.00
Emotional:	0 Points - Not Identified	Child Basic Rate:	\$0.00
Behavioral:	0 Points - Not Identified	Exceptional Amounts:	\$0.00

Options: [Go](#)

[Save](#) [Close](#)

Done Local intranet

SG - Program Assignment

Program Assignment - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by DHFS - State of Wisconsin

eWiSACWIS

Print Spell Check Help

Child Information

Child's Last Name: SubGuard Child's First Name: Andy [Search](#)

Child's Person ID: 9221917 DOB: 02/01/2003

Program Assignment

Program	Group	Case	Begin Date	Estimated End Date	End Date	
Subsidized Guardianship	Experimental	9221289 - CPS Family	02/01/2005	02/01/2010	00/00/0000	Delete

Options:

Done Local intranet

SG - Maintain Case

Maintain Case - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by DHFS - State of Wisconsin

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Case

Last/Provider: SubGuard Number: 9221289 Status: Open

First: Mom Initial: Open Date: 02/24/2005

Participants Address Collaterals Closing History

Basic

Case Type: CPS Family Description: Single Female ☐ Restricted Case

County: Milwaukee Site/Region: Milwaukee-Site 1

Number of Household Members: CARES Case Number: County Case Number:

Participants

Name	Hshld	Status	DOB	Gender	Relationship	Legal	Prg	
SubGuard, Andy	U	Active	02/01/2003	Male	Biological Child	Guard. to Relative/C: (48.977)	Y	DeActivate Remove
SubGuard, ChildFour	U	Active	02/01/2002	Female	Biological Child	None	N	DeActivate Remove
SubGuard, ChildOne	N	(SG)	02/01/2004	Female	Biological Child	None	Y	

[Insert](#)

Options: [Go](#) [Save](#) [Close](#)

Done Local intranet

SG - Deactivate

Participant Status -- Web Page Dialog

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Participant Status

Action Requested: DeActivate
Name: SubGuard, Andy
Worker: Caitlin Cake
Reason: Subsidized Guardianship
Date: 02/25/2005
Effective Date: 02/01/2005

New SG Case

Case Type: Subsidized Guardianship
Description: Single Male
County: Milwaukee
Site/Region: Milwaukee-Site 1

Participant History

Status	Effective Date	Reason	Worker
Active	02/25/2005		

eWiSACWIS -- Web Page Dialog

De-activation of Participant with reason 'Subsidized Guardianship' will result in the creation of a new Case. Continue?

Yes No

Options: Go

Save Close

Insert

Local intranet